

# FASTer forward: or why the British Library chose Faceted Application of Subject Terminology

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Faceted Subject Headings:  
Exploring the Topic, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022

# Overview

Context for the decision to move to FAST

How we've used FAST

Implementation plan

Anticipated benefits

# Context

FAST will supersede LCSH as our subject indexing vocabulary from August 2022

The British Library started using FAST in 2015

- Increasing demand
  - Growth of legal deposit intake
  - Bulk digitisation
  - Backlog reduction
  - Race Equality Action Plan
  - Great resign/retirements
- Changing audience expectations
  - Integration of discovery services
  - Linking to other vocabularies
  - Keyword not browse

## FAST Forward

Adopting the Faceted Application of Subject Terminology vocabulary

### STATEMENT

In 2015/16 the British Library consulted on the future of our subject indexing systems. Specifically, we asked stakeholders for their views on the following proposals:

1. The British Library proposes to adopt FAST selectively to extend the scope of subject indexing of current and legacy content.
2. The British Library proposes to implement FAST as a replacement for LCSH in all current cataloguing, subject to mitigation of the risks identified in the background paper; in particular, the question of sustainability.

The response to the first question was neutral. In general, stakeholders had no serious concerns about the selective use of FAST. The response to the second question was generally negative. Respondents had two main concerns:

- the quality and specificity of FAST relative to LCSH
- the sustainability of FAST, which was at that time an OCLC research project rather than a service

During the 6 years that have elapsed since that consultation, the British Library has continued to apply LCSH to UK Legal Deposit for the British National Bibliography, while extending the application of FAST. FAST has enabled us to assign subject index terms to legacy descriptions and apply subject indexing to an extent that would not have been possible with LCSH. In the course of this work, we have seen no evidence that an array of FAST headings performs significantly differently from a suite of LCSH strings.

The work we have undertaken with OCLC and the FAST user community to develop the FAST Policy and Outreach Committee has given us confidence that FAST will be a sustainable standard for the foreseeable future.

We believe that the time is now right for FAST to replace LCSH as the subject indexing standard for all British Library cataloguing, including BNB. This change will be introduced incrementally starting in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2022 and is the culmination of a process which began in 2015.

This decision has not been taken lightly. It has been driven by the following challenges:

#### Increasing demands on cataloguing

- Growth of legal deposit intake
- Bulk digitisation
- Backlog reduction
- Race Equality Action Plan
- Great resign/retirements

#### Audience expectations

- Integration of discovery services
- Linking to other vocabularies
- Keyword not browse

We recognise that this represents a significant change for users of our metadata. But we firmly believe that FAST will provide a flexible and sustainable solution to meet the changing needs of the Library and its stakeholders. Please consult the document below for further information about the proposed changes.

Kind regards,

Andrew MacEwan & Adele Pease

Head of Metadata

# Historical Context

**1973** - British Library created by Act of Parliament

**1988** - *Currency with coverage*

**1991** - *COMPASS*

**1994** – LCSH (re)introduced

**1998** – St. Pancras building opens

**2015** – *Unlocking the value*

**2015** – Limited application of FAST

**2016** – Stakeholder consultation on FAST

**2019** – FAST Policy & Outreach Committee

**2022** - Implementation of FAST



## British Library Act 1972

CHAPTER 54

### ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

Section

1. The British Library.
2. The Board.
3. Transfer of British Museum Library.
4. Further provisions as to the Board.
5. Finance and accounts.
6. Consultation on terms and conditions of employment of staff.
7. Citation.

SCHEDULE—The British Library Board and its Advisory Councils.

# Subject Standards

## PAST

- British National Bibliography:  
*Precis; DDC; ComPASS; LCSH*
- British Museum departments:  
*Watts' Elastic Classification*
- Science Reference Information  
Service: *SRIS classification*
- Document Supply – no subject  
indexing / keywords / *SIGLE*  
*Classification*

## PRESENT

- DDC
- FAST
- LCSH
- UKAT (UK Archival Thesaurus)
- Sound & Vision subject authorities

# Historical Context

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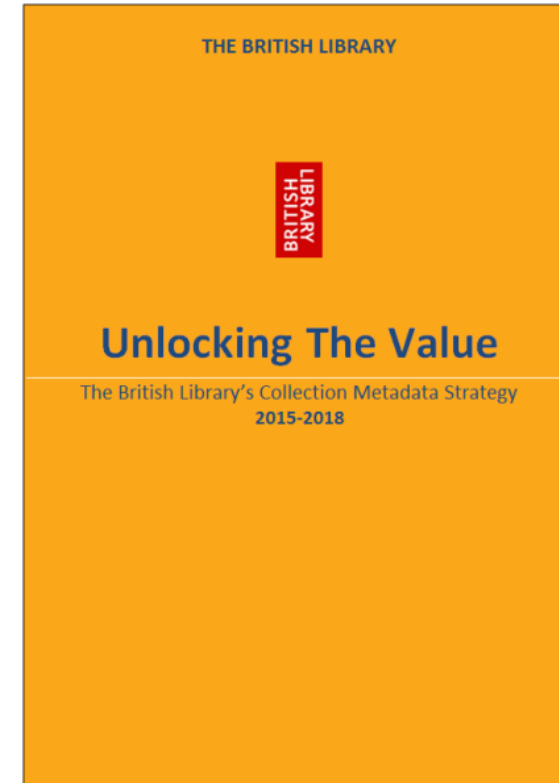
**2015** – *Unlocking the value*

**2015** – Limited application of FAST

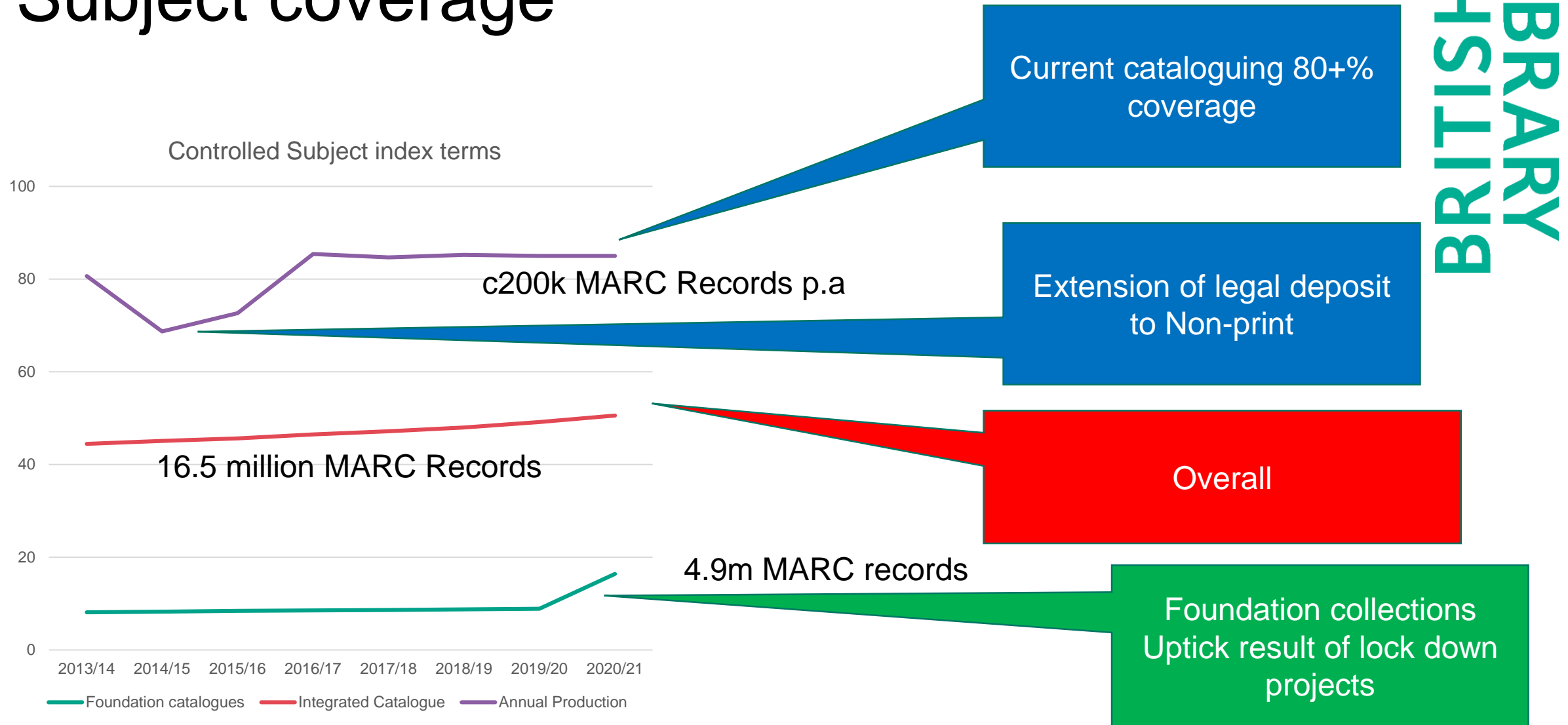
**2016** – Stakeholder consultation on FAST

**2019** – FAST Policy & Outreach Committee

**2022** - Implementation of FAST



# Subject coverage



# FAST enables application of controlled indexing terms

FAST pilot in 2015/16.

Scope of application restricted

Restrictions gradually relaxed

FAST applied to digital Official publications and Grey Literature

Training offered externally

Cataloguing projects

- Backlog reduction
- Retrospective conversion
- Digitisation
- Crowdsourcing
- Metadata enhancement

Greater flexibility for staffing

Automated/semi automated processes



# Why use FAST?

Use Cases: Exposing Special collections

## ➤ 370 French Propaganda Posters

- PhD Student
- Input spreadsheet
- Metadata Analyst

## ✓ MARC Records

- ✓ FAST array (defaulted)
- ✓ Multiple facets

✓ Ge

61127	a World War (1914-1918)  2 fast  0 (OCoLC)f
648 7	a 1914-1918  2 fast  0 (OCoLC)fst01355873
650 0	a World War, 1914-1918  z France.
651 7	a France.  2 fast  0 (OCoLC)fst01204289
655 7	a Posters.  2 fast  0 (OCoLC)fst01423847
655 7	a Propaganda posters.  2 fast  0 (OCoLC)fst01985339



Summary	Subject	Second
Government issued poster announcing the departure of the gove	61127 #aWorld War (1914-1918)#2fast#0(OCoLC)fst01180746	651 7 #
Poster with transcription of the speech given by Georges Clem	61127 #aWorld War (1914-1918)#2fast#0(OCoLC)fst01180746	651 7 #
Poster advertising a series of talks organised by the Société de G	61127 #aWorld War (1914-1918)#2fast#0(OCoLC)fst01180746	651 7 #
Poster with image reminiscent of the Greek goddess Nike wearin	61127 #aWorld War (1914-1918)#2fast#0(OCoLC)fst01180746	651 7 #

**Title:** Marne, Yser, Somme, Verdun : l'Aurore / Henri Royer.

**Author:** Henri Paul Royer, 1869-

**Subjects:** World War (1914-1918); World War, 1914-1918 -- France; France; 1914-1918; Posters; Propaganda posters

**Publication Details:** Paris : Lapina, [between 1917 and 1918]

**Language:** French

/ the	61127 #aWorld War (1914-1918)#2fast#0(OCoLC)fst01180746	651 7 #
Gym	61127 #aWorld War (1914-1918)#2fast#0(OCoLC)fst01180746	651 7 #
n) an	61127 #aWorld War (1914-1918)#2fast#0(OCoLC)fst01180746	651 7 #
the c	61127 #aWorld War (1914-1918)#2fast#0(OCoLC)fst01180746	651 7 #
ig all	61127 #aWorld War (1914-1918)#2fast#0(OCoLC)fst01180746	651 7 #
w re	61127 #aWorld War (1914-1918)#2fast#0(OCoLC)fst01180746	651 7 #

BRITISH LIBRARY

# Why use FAST?

Use Cases: indexing official publications and grey literature

Response to extension of Legal  
Deposit to non-print media

FAST is assigned to born digital OP &  
Grey Lit material from home countries

The picklist is used in our document  
harvester to enhance records

A mapping to DDC has been included  
for consistency with British National  
Bibliography

## Pick List - Established Headings

FAST HEADING	BROAD DEWEY CODE	ABRIDGED
650 #7 \$\$aAccounting\$\$2fast\$\$0(OCOLC)fst00795379	657	Yes
650 #7 \$\$aAdult education\$\$2fast\$\$0(OCOLC)fst00797275	374	Yes
650 #7 \$\$aAeronautics, Commercial\$\$2fast\$\$0(OCOLC)fst00798462	387.7	Yes
650 #7 \$\$aAgriculture\$\$2fast\$\$0(OCOLC)fst00801355	630	Yes
650 #7 \$\$aAir forces\$\$2fast\$\$0(OCOLC)fst00802378	358.4	Yes
650 #7 \$\$aAnimal health\$\$2fast\$\$0(OCOLC)fst00809209	636.0893	No (Synthesised Number)
650 #7 \$\$aArchives\$\$2fast\$\$0(OCOLC)fst00814030	027	Yes
650 #7 \$\$aArmed Forces\$\$2fast\$\$0(OCOLC)fst00814586	355	Yes
650 #7 \$\$aArmies\$\$2fast\$\$0(OCOLC)fst00814802	356	Yes
650 #7 \$\$aArts\$\$2fast\$\$0(OCOLC)fst00817721	700	Yes
650 #7 \$\$aBuilding\$\$2fast\$\$0(OCOLC)fst00840551	690	Yes

# Why use FAST?

## Use Cases: retrospective catalogue conversion

### Working from OCR

*Catalogue of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum. Division 1 : personal and political satires*

- Analysis of text
- Regular expression identifies and flags key terms
  - E.g., “medal”
- Identification of relevant controlled terms

### XSLT converts text to MARC XML

- Script matches appropriate FAST heading to flag

31.

A DUTCH MEDAL OF QUEEN ELIZABETH AND THE STATE DEPUTIES. [1585]

OBVERSE, the Queen sitting amid roses, holding out her hand to the deputies, with legends, “*Rosa Nectare Imbuita*,” and “*Macte Animi*.” Reverse, two men eating hay out of a manger with a horse and an ass: with legend “*Spreta ambrosia Vescilis Feno*, 1585.”

This engraving is No. 4 in Plate VIII. of the illustrations to Pinkerton’s “*Medallic History of England*,” 1790.

Each circle, 1½ in.

Brit. Mus. Library, 676, h. 4.

32.

THE EARL OF LEICESTER’S MEDAL, ON HIS ABANDONING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED PROVINCES. [1587]

OBVERSE, Leicester’s head, with motto, “*Robe. Co. Leic. et in Belg. Guber.* 1587.” Reverse, a shepherd’s dog abandoning a flock of sheep, with motto, “*Non Gregem Sed Ingratos Invitos Desero.*”

This engraving is No. 1 in Plate VIII. of the illustrations to Pinkerton’s “*Medallic History of England*,” 1790. See “*A Medal of the Earl of Leicester*,” &c., same date, No. 33, 1587.

Each circle, 1½ in.

Brit. Mus. Library, 676, h. 4.

33.

A MEDAL OF THE EARL OF LEICESTER, ON HIS ABANDONING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED PROVINCES. [1587]

OBVERSE, Leicester’s head, with the motto, “*Robertvs Dvdleivs Com. Leyc. Belg. Gvb.*” Reverse, a shepherd’s dog abandoning a flock of sheep, with motto, “*Non Gregem sed Ingratos Invitos Desero.*”

This engraving is No. 2 in Plate VIII. of the illustrations to Pinkerton’s “*Medallic History of England*,” 1790. See “*The Earl of Leicester’s Medal*,” &c., same date, No. 32, 1587.

Each circle, 1½ in.

Brit. Mus. Library, 676, h. 4.

```

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  <publisher_of_book>Edwards & Sons; Faulder</publisher_of_book>
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1588‡2fast‡0(0CoLC)fst00016504</marc:fast>
</image>

```

# Mapping FAST to Wells' *Elastic classification*

Total impact

FAST headings: 379,184  
records enhanced

008 country codes added:  
84,983

Other fixed field values  
(positions 22 and 33; target  
audience and nature of  
contents): 184,096

United States of America		A.S.1	
United States of America		P.P.6153.ia-ic.	
United States of America		P.P.6153.ia-ic.	
United States, Religious Controversy	4182		4183
United States, Church History	4744	4745	
United States, Biography, Religious	4985		4986
United States, Law	6614	6778	
United States, Politics	8175	8177	
United States, History	9602	9615	
United States, Topography	10408	10413	
United States, Biography	10880	10883	
United States, Signal Service	A.S.700	A.S.707	
United States, Congress	A.S.1	A.S.46	
United States, Commerce & Labor	A.S.1		A.S.59
United States, Army	A.S.33	A.S.776	
United States. Commerce & Labor		A.S.1	A.S.59

Excerpt from Alston's  
Index to Shelfmarks



# Implementation milestones

- Most cataloguers experienced in LCSH
- Transition to FAST is usually smooth

July 2022	Training British Library cataloguers to apply FAST to legal deposit material
August 2022	Commence dissemination of BNB records with FAST headings instead of LCSH headings
October 2022	Commence dissemination of Cataloguing in Publication (CIP) CIP records with FAST
2022 onwards	FAST replaces LCSH in other data supply contracts let by the British Library

## Incremental process

- Training will take some time to complete
- Cataloguers will start to apply FAST when trained

## Hybrid process

- Derived records will not be routed to cataloguers for FAST indexing if LCSH is present and correct
- Retrospective conversion of LCSH to FAST is not a priority
- LCSH will continue to be assigned to ESTC records

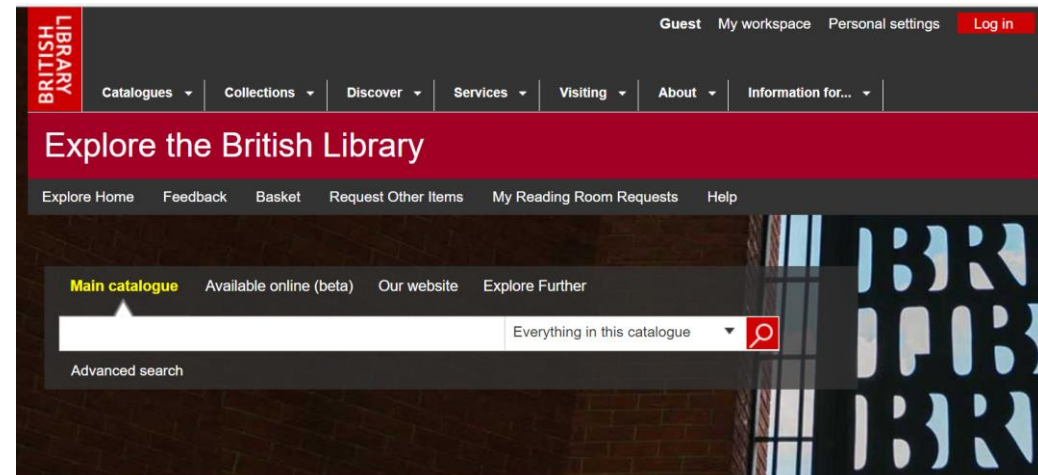
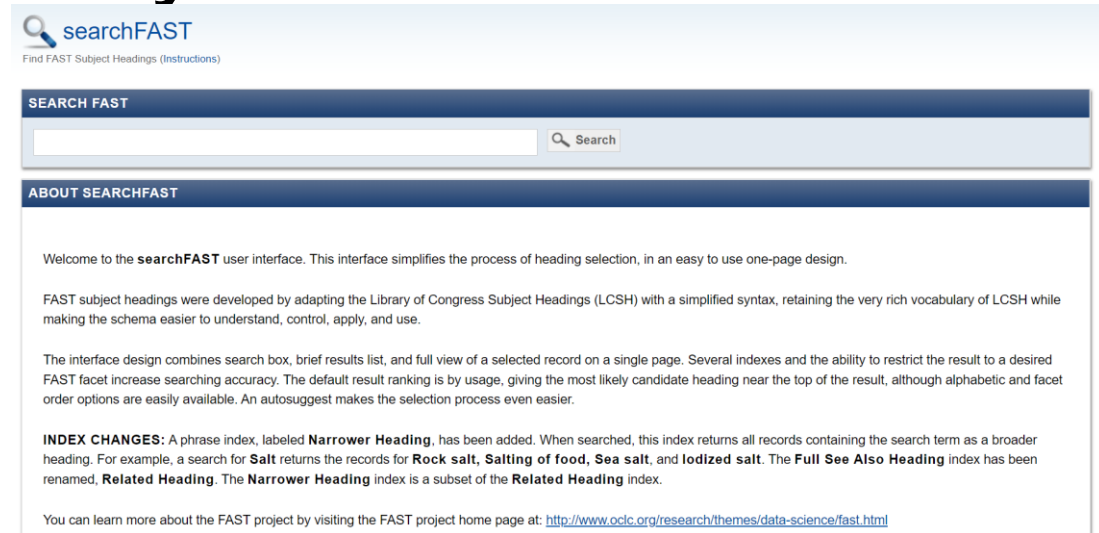
# Application and Discovery

Cataloguers will cut & paste from searchFAST

There is no browse index for subjects in our PRIMO implementation

Subject index includes terms from FAST and LCSH

Future consideration to providing faceted search of subject terms



# A few FAQs

**Q.** Will you be accepting copy that has LCSH but not FAST?

**A.** Yes.

**Q.** Will FAST training be available from British Library?

**A.** *Yes. We have delivered FAST training externally in the past. The course is delivered online. A mix of self-guided and in person sessions. Currently updating our training offer.*

**Q.** Will you be adding FAST retrospectively to existing records?

**A.** *It is not a priority to add it to records that have been subject indexed. The priority is to add it to records that lack any subject index terms*



# Benefits

## Enabling

- Linked data
- Backwards compatibility
- Editorial support
- SACO FAST Funnel

Quicker on-boarding

More indexing

Less discussion

FAST TERMS			TERM DETAILS	
Search results for: "change"			<b>Organizational change</b> <a href="#">Find in WorldCat</a>	
Limit Results by: <span>All</span>			USED FOR:	
Displaying 1 to 10 of 2510 <span>&lt; &lt; Previous</span> <span>Next &gt; &gt;</span>			Change, Organizational	
			Organization development	
			Organizational development	
			Organizational innovation	
			SEE ALSO:	
			Management( <a href="#">OCoLC</a> )fst01007141	
			Organization( <a href="#">OCoLC</a> )fst01047777	
			Manpower planning( <a href="#">OCoLC</a> )fst01007883	
			USAGE:	
			LC (2022) Subject Usage: 4,750	
			WC (2022) Subject Usage: 57,026	
			RECORD ID:	
			fst01047828	
			SOURCES AND OTHER LINKS:	
			Organizational change--( <a href="#">DLC</a> )sh 85095525	
			Organization development-- <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organization_development">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organization_development</a> --	
			<a href="https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q650472">https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q650472</a>	
			Changement organisationnel-- <a href="http://data.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb119596310">http://data.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb119596310</a>	
			Organisationswandel-- <a href="http://d-nb.info/gnd/4075693-2">http://d-nb.info/gnd/4075693-2</a>	
			LINKS TO FULL RECORD:	
			Permanent Link <a href="http://id.worldcat.org/fast/1047828">http://id.worldcat.org/fast/1047828</a>	
			MARC-21 record <a href="http://id.worldcat.org/fast/1047828.html">http://id.worldcat.org/fast/1047828.html</a>	
			MARC 21 LITE 8 (raw data) <a href="http://id.worldcat.org/fast/1047828.marc">http://id.worldcat.org/fast/1047828.marc</a>	

# Links to further information

[FAST forward at the British Library](#)

*British Library consultation on Subject Standards (2016) & Response* can be found in the UKWeb Archive at this link:

[News \(webarchive.org.uk\)](#)

[FAST Policy & Outreach Committee](#)

[FAST Quick Start Guide \(oclc.org\)](#)

Thank  
you

